

Golden Schools gear up to welcome students

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dents; however, we anticipate new families coming into the community during the fall will bring our enrollment back up to about 320.”

The lower than expected number of registrations may be a consequence of last spring’s extension of the 1st Armored Division’s deployment to Iraq. Since most Soldiers returned to Germany in July and August, some families are still on block leave and may have postponed registering their children, said principals.

“We have fewer kids than we were hoping to get,” said Georgia Williams-Fitzpatrick, Hanau Middle School principal. “I know that’s true for at least two other schools around here.” She wasn’t sure if enrollments would increase as families return from block leave. “I can’t project it. We just had 25 people who came in between Monday and today [a Wednesday].”

“We’re probably about 28 under,” said Debra Brooks, Wetzel Elementary School principal. “I’m not too worried. They’ll dribble in.”

Regardless of the lag in registration principals rallied their teachers to prepare for the year ahead. In addition to academic issues leaders are reinforcing the need to maintain high sensitivity to the needs of children and their families who are still adjusting to last year’s deployment.

“Our teachers have been keenly aware for over a year now what kids are going through,” said Mueller. “They’ve worked very hard to keep them busy, keep their minds on other things. Things are not necessarily ‘normal’ just now. We’ll continue to meet the needs of our kids both academically and socially. We know this is a period of adjustment.”

“When I see the kids in the community, they’re all anxious to get back,” said Brooks. “They’re excited about getting back into a routine and seeing their friends. The teachers are really excited and ready to roll. They’re anxious as well.”

As a precursor to the start of teaching, administrators from both the Heidelberg and Kaiserslautern District Superintendents’ Offices met in Bad Dürkheim Aug. 18-20 to discuss goals and strategy. The number one goal of the Community Strategic Plan that outlines the DoDDS approach continues to be attaining highest possible student achievement.

The aim is to have at least 75 percent of students scoring in the top two quarters, at or above standard, on annually administered Terra Nova standardized tests and no more than 8 percent below the standard. Cogently defining standards and monitoring student progress toward them was a main emphasis

of the conference.

“Accountability is the name of the game across the board,” said Brooks. “Diana Ohman [DoDDS-Europe director] said that there’s been \$4.5-5 million spent on training, so what do we get for that? What do we see with classroom practices and what are the kids getting out of it?”

Principals were tasked with leading the learning experience, committed to spending at least an hour everyday in their school’s classrooms. Academic goals remain focused on mathematics and language arts.

“This year we will continue our focus on Math Matters,” said Dr. Candace Ransing, deputy director of DoDDS-Europe. “There will be a major focus on algebra in our middle and secondary schools to ensure that each student is successful in this foundation course.”

Math and careers

“We’re trying to show kids at all levels the sound connections between math and careers,” said Frank O’Gara of DoDDS-Europe. “Whether it’s a pharmacist, a scientist, a Soldier—mathematics is fundamental to the real world. Math matters. Beyond basic computation skills we’re emphasizing geometry, algebra and data analysis — skills that they’ll need for the adult world.”

Literacy will be reinforced with a full implementation this year of the pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade English Language Arts program, said Ransing. Reading Recovery programs, which provide additional support to first-graders experiencing difficulties learning to read, continue to grow.

DoDDS principals were charged

with monitoring their students’ performance, using testing and analysis to detect areas of weakness and redirecting teaching efforts to improve results. Third-graders will be assessed with the Developmental Reading Assessment, and sixth-grade students will be screened with a Scholastic Reading Inventory for the first time this year to monitor progress.

The ongoing Department of Defense Education Activity curriculum development cycle includes a pre-implementation phase for science at all grade levels this year, said Ransing. Teachers will train to implement the new curriculum, and textbooks that support it are being purchased.

In addition funds are being made available to upgrade the science collections for all grades in DoDDS media centers and to replace and replenish science materials in middle and high schools. Science kits for children in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade are part of the materials purchase. The strategy is to encourage a hands-on approach to teaching science in the elementary grades.

In a related development funding is being provided to make participation in the Jason Project available to all sixth-grade classes. The Jason Project is a multidisciplinary approach to scientific inquiry that lets students communicate directly with scientists working in the field on a range of projects, while their classroom teachers use the fundamentals behind the fieldwork to teach the basics of math, science and related social studies. Schools that incorporate the Jason Project in their science programs at other grades will continue to be supported by DoDDS-E, said Ransing.

Seventh-graders will have access to the Golden Apple Valley Research Telescope as an adjunct to their science programs. Through Internet access to a decommissioned National Aeronautics and Space Administration radio telescope located in California’s Mojave Desert, students participate in ongoing projects that collect data on a range of studies, including Jupiter’s magnetic fields, quasars, black holes and other celestial objects. Details on program training and imple-

mentation are being determined.

With an ever expanding emphasis on the Internet as an educational tool for children in all grades, DoDEA has proposed and funded a program to teach children to use it safely. Age appropriate programs have been purchased to teach youngsters about personal and community safety online, cyber security and predator identification. Segments on plagiarism and the theft of intellectual property make students come to terms with the ethical dimension of working online.

Visual arts teachers will undergo training this year to bring even more advanced technology into DoDDS classrooms. Elementary school teachers are to be trained on the use of digital cameras, and middle and high school teachers will be trained on Adobe software packages and Macintosh computers to bring sophisticated software into their classrooms.

Music teachers will begin standards training in November, and a materials review process will begin in December, with pre-implementation of approaches and materials to begin at the start of the 2005-2206 school year. Teachers will also begin a review process for humanities materials in January, and a conference will be held in May to discuss strategies for the following year.

Outside the classroom DoDDS students can count on field trips and extracurricular activities this year within the framework of constantly monitored security assessments.

Force protection

“Force protection is always a concern,” said O’Gara. “We’re continuing to work closely with community commanders to see if they are appropriate. All the big DoDDS-E events are scheduled, and we expect them to go forward.”

Whatever else the year ahead may bring, the emphasis in 104th ASG schools will be on learning and student well-being when the bells ring Sept. 7.

“Last year we had a deployment. This year we have to build up our relationships with our families, make them part of the school,” said Brooks. “We don’t want to leave any of our children behind, have any child fall through the cracks.”

“Families continue to be in a state of flux during this difficult time, and as we begin the school year we all need to watch our students for those signs of stress that result from long deployments and the day-to-day uncertainty of life,” said Ransing.

“We’ll make it,” said Williams-Fitzpatrick. “Everybody is prepared to flex. That’s true for the whole district. We know there’s a war and we’re ready for them when they walk through the door.”



Photo by Karl Weisel

Students work on a project at Giessen Middle/High School. DoDDS features a full curriculum of academic, hands-on and extracurricular opportunities.

Superintendent aims at student success

By Elizabeth Walker
Heidelberg District superintendent



Welcome to our schools. Our goal is to provide the best educational opportunities to ensure each child’s success. This year in our ongoing dedication to helping all children be successful we will be focusing on Goal No. 1 of our Community Strategic Plan, Highest Student Achievement.

Our theme this year continues to be

Math Matters. We encourage you to contact your child’s school and see what you can do to get involved with the teachers and administrators to ensure that all children know that Math Matters.

We have highly qualified and motivated educators, ample supplies and well-equipped facilities. We also know that in you, our parents, we have a caring, supportive and involved community. We are committed to working together with you to help each child in our schools grow and learn socially, personally and educationally.

I invite you to visit our schools, get involved and share with us your thoughts about how we may better serve your children. You are encouraged to communicate directly with the teachers and administrators in each building to address issues or concerns.

For your convenience my office maintains a website, www.heid-dso.eu.ododedea.edu, where you may leave a message 24 hours a day. Just click on the hotline button. You will receive a personal response, usually within 48 hours. The website also

hosts a wealth of information about our schools and district activities.

We are aware that these are stressful times for students, parents and educators. We will do all we can to make sure that all children are given the best possible learning environment while attending our schools.

Thank you for entrusting your children to the Heidelberg District schools. I pledge to you to do my utmost to ensure a safe and secure learning environment, quality customer service and a successful school experience for each child.



Parents must help students get to school safely

By Mohammed Awan
414th Base Support Battalion Safety Office

With local schools just about to open, parents and motorists must take precautions to ensure children reach their destination without harm. There will be lots of German and American school children, including inexperienced younger pupils, out and about making their way to and from school.

Parents and adults must set the example. Children copy a lot of things older children and adults do. If grown-ups ignore traffic signs and lights, children may do the same, especially when they are on their own. Parents should show children the safest way to get to school and where to cross streets — only at signaled and marked crosswalks and where crossing guards are stationed.

Children act spontaneously, and because of their height they can’t judge the



Photo by Karl Weisel

Students head home after school at Dexheim Elementary School.

speed or distances between moving vehicles. They should be taught not to dash out between parked cars. Teaching youngsters to walk in groups is

also important. Parents should discourage children from walking home alone or taking shortcuts. Children should stick to the same safe route.

Who’s who in local schools

Below are telephone number contacts for school principals, school liaison officers and district superintendents who oversee Department of Defense Dependents Schools in the 104th Area Support Group.

The 14 schools in the 221st, 284th and 414th Base Support Battalions fall under the purview of the Heidelberg District Superintendent’s Office; the Kaiserslautern DSO oversees the four schools in the 222nd Base Support Battalion.

Heidelberg District Superintendent’s Office: Dr. Elizabeth Walker — mil 388-9383

221st Base Support Battalion schools liaison officer: Peter Witmer — mil 337-7004

Dexheim Elementary School: Principal Ora Flippen-Casper — mil 334-5876

Aukamm Elementary School: Principal Mark Benham — mil 337-6260/6261

Hainerberg Elementary School: Principal Barbara Hickman, assistant principal Wanda McKinzy — mil 337-5873/5160/5552

Wiesbaden Middle School: Principal Alexia Venglik, assistant principal Kenneth Younkin — mil 337-6251/6258

Gen. H.H. Arnold High School: Principal Eric Goldman, assistant principals Dr. David Theis and Shelia Smith — mil 337-6319/6238/5348

284th Base Support Battalion schools liaison officer: Deborah Brown — mil 343-7731/8610

Bad Nauheim Elementary School: Principal Dr. Eugene Perillo — civ (06032) 86800

Butzbach Elementary School: Principal Sue Morin — civ (06033) 74520

Giessen Elementary School: Principal Barbara Mueller — mil 343-7248/6690

Giessen Middle-High School: Principal Dr. Allen Davenport, assistant principal Walter Ulrich — mil 343-7333/7259

414th Base Support Battalion schools liaison officer: Linda Tolén — mil 322-9765

Argonner Elementary School: Principal Dr. David Trukositz, assistant principal Laura McGann — mil 322-8374

Gelnhausen Elementary School: Principal Essie Grant — civ (06051) 13011

Sportfield Elementary School: Principal Eric Gentry — mil 322-8600/8990

Hanau Middle School: Principal Georgia Williams-Fitzpatrick, assistant principal Martha Duncan — 322-8647/8649

Hanau High School: Principal Terri Marshall, assistant principal Christina Echevarria — mil 322-8714

Kaiserslautern School District Superintendent’s Office: Dr. Archie Bates — mil 489-6339

222nd Base Support Battalion schools liaison officer: Gene Winfree — 485-1770

Neubrück Elementary School: Principal Wayne Dozark — mil 485-7720

Smith Elementary School: Principal Bill Rose, assistant principal Helen Balilo — mil 485-7589

Wetzel Elementary School: Principal Debra Brooks — mil 485-7492

Baumholder American High School: Principal Dominick Calabria, assistant principal James Funk — mil 485-7590